

## **SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of the Meeting Monday, June 13, 2005**

Members Present: Mr. Staton, Mr. Martin, Mr. Daniel, Senator Fair, Senator Hayes, Representative Neal, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Stowe, Superintendent Tenenbaum, Representative Walker, Mr. Wilson

- I. **Welcome and Introductions:** Mr. Staton welcomed members and guests to the meeting. He explained the order of activities, beginning with the recognition of elementary and middle schools for progress toward closing the achievement gap.
- II. **Approval of the Minutes:** The minutes of the April 11 meeting were approved as distributed.
- III. **Special Report:**
  - A. Recognition of Schools: Mr. Staton expressed respect and admiration for the schools recognized in the achievement gap study. He then presented certificates to each of the principals present.
  - B. Analysis of the Data: Mr. Potter reviewed the report with the members of the EOC and their guests. The study outlines the urgency of closing the gap, the actions taken at the policy and practice levels to support high achievement for all students and the standard of performance met by target groups in the recognized schools.
  - C. Remarks from Principals:
    - (1) Mrs. Peggie Grant, Principal of Brown's Ferry Elementary School in Georgetown County, addressed the EOC and guests. She outlined very deliberate and relentless actions to establish partnerships with parents and the community. She detailed the use of school and non-school time in support of high achievement and the challenges before her school. Members asked a number of questions regarding those partnerships.
    - (2) Dr. Lee Rawl, Principal at Belton-Honea Path Elementary School in Anderson County School District Two, addressed the EOC and guests. He organized his school's approach into seven components: quality teachers and staff; an atmosphere that supports risk-taking and protects teachers from non-teaching tasks; an atmosphere supportive of parental and community involvement; an atmosphere that respects *students right to learn, teachers right to teach and does not allow anyone to interfere with these rights*; effective use of time on task; a progressive educational philosophy that emphasizes success on the content standards and Dewey's focus on the whole child; and a culture of caring.
- IV. **Subcommittee Reports**
  - A. **Academic Standards and Assessments:** Mr. Wilson reported on behalf of the Subcommittee. (1) He outlined changes to the district ratings calculation that incorporate the end-of-course assessments and weight four-year graduation higher. The changes were approved as presented. (2) Mr. Wilson then reported a subcommittee recommendation to revert to the previous methodology for primary schools since the use of ECERS has been excluded. An advisory group on primary school ratings is to be convened in

the fall to explore other criteria that may be linked more readily to academic performance. The recommendation was adopted.

(3) Mr. Wilson then informed the EOC of the status of the review process on the science standards and that the EOC should anticipate final recommendations in October. Senator Fair raised a number of questions regarding comments on the standards incorporating the teaching of evolution.

Superintendent Tenenbaum distributed two articles in which the rigor of South Carolina's performance standards is discussed. She expressed concerns that the implementation regulations and/or guidelines for No Child Left Behind now preclude the use of off-level tests for students with disabilities. She asked the EOC to review the practice of lowering ratings for schools rated Excellent or Good that do not meet the AYP objective for all students. She is concerned that schools are penalized by the federal requirements regarding students with disabilities or those with limited English proficiency.

Senator Hayes suggested that the EOC consider writing the congressional delegation to express the continuing concerns regarding comparisons among states whose standards differ significantly in rigor.

Mr. Wilson emphasized that the EOC is requiring evidence of student transfer in the calculation of the graduation rate. The presumption of enrollment in another program skews our understanding and may lead to ineffectual actions.

- B. **EIA and Improvement Mechanisms:** Mr. Daniel reported on behalf of the subcommittee. He provided information on four items: (1) The Fiscal Year 2006 budget provides over \$400 million new dollars for public education, primarily through full funding of the Education Finance Act and rising revenues in the Education Improvement Act revenues. Almost all of EOC recommendations were adopted; (2) The contract for the review of the external review team has been established with Hezel and Associates; (3) The annual report on the use of budgetary flexibility was reviewed; and (4) The first report of the review of the gifted and talented program was presented. This report raised questions and concerns about the availability of endorsement-training for teachers, the inclusion of minorities, access to arts programs and the performance of students in the program.
- C. **Parental and Community Involvement:** There was no report.
- D. **Public Awareness:** Mr. Martin reported on behalf of the subcommittee. He outlined the PAIRS partnerships and the public announcement on Thursday, June 16 of the Allen partnership.
- E. **Administration:** Dr. Anderson reminded members of the August meeting to be held at Coastal Carolina University, drew their attention to a memorandum at their seats on legislative changes in EOC activities and to an update on the Common Ground planning process.

Having no other business, the EOC adjourned.